



# TEXAS LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL

A PROJECT OF THE AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE

## **Lights on Afterschool**

### ***Lone Star State Toolkit***

**2017**

## **Included in this Toolkit:**

- What is Lights on Afterschool?
- Resources on Afterschool in Texas
- Recommended Activities and Curriculum
- Media Templates
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- Social Media and Outreach

## What is Lights on Afterschool?

Lights on Afterschool is the only nationwide event celebrating **afterschool** and its importance in the lives of students, families and communities. Communities across the state celebrate this event by opening their programs, hosting meals and community classes, and engaging families in STEM activities and experiments.

Lights on Afterschool has been celebrated since 2000 in communities across our state. Growing from 345 programs in 2009 to over 700 registered events in 2017- with a week of registration still open. The growth is just one demonstration of how important afterschool programs are in communities across the state.

Communities celebrate Lights on Afterschool at museums and through hosting Zumba classes, by writing to Congress and [eating tacos](#). Please [share your story with TXPOST](#) – both via social media and on our website. We look forward to demonstrating the importance of afterschool in communities across the state.

TXPOST would like to say a special thank you to Fluor Corp, especially Senior Manager for Community and Public Affairs, Lisa Proctor for supporting this campaign and for their long time support of afterschool programming. Another special thanks to Sabrina Walker-Hernandez, Chief Executive Officer Boys and Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV for sharing samples and tools that she has used to promote Lights on Afterschool.

## Resources on Afterschool in Texas

These resources are designed for programs who want to share some additional information with parents, community members and policymakers. Many of these resources can be found on multiple websites, but TXPOST has highlighted links and templates that provide information about the Lone Star state and when possible, highlight the unique skills and opportunities found across the state.

### Information about Afterschool in Texas

Texas After 3 pm – Fact Sheet

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/TX-AA3PM-2014-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Texas Afterschool Facts

<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyStateFacts.cfm?state=TX>

Key Facts about Hunger in Texas

<https://www.txpost.org/key-facts-about-hunger-in-texas/>

## Recommended Activities and Curriculum

**Lights on Afterschool - Flour STEM Activity Challenge** Grant - TXPOST invites you to submit an application to the LOA Fluor STEM Activity Challenge grant - a project supported by Fluor. **5 programs will be awarded a \$2,000 grant.** To be eligible for funding please see the requirements below:

- Complete and submit an [application](#) by **Wednesday, October 25th**. The application was designed with the busy professional in mind!
- Conduct one of the Fluor Engineering Challenges found [here](#). (There are three to choose from!)
- Celebrate Lights on Afterschool!
- Share your project progress and LOA activities on social media using the following hashtags: #LOAFlourEngineeringChallenge, #LightsonAfterschool @tx\_post

Winners will be notified by Friday, November 10th. To be eligible for this funding you must be an afterschool program operating in the state of Texas. If you have any questions - we are here! Please contact Mercadi Crawford at [mercadi@txpost.org](mailto:mercadi@txpost.org).

Other recommended curriculum and activities include:

[Design for Change](#)- project based learning focused on identifying community programs and using design thinking to promote change.

[Click2Science](#) – facilitation skill development, webinars for staff and more.

[Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) – physical activity and healthy eating activities and lessons.

For more events and curriculum ideas click [here](#)!

## Sample Press Release

### **Program Name** Announces its participation in “*Lights On Afterschool*” Events Highlighting the Importance of Afterschool Programs

[XXXXXX, TX] – OCTOBER 26, 2017 On October 26, 2017, **Program name** will join more than 500 Texas afterschool programs will participate in “*Lights On Afterschool*” as part of a national initiative celebrating the achievements of afterschool students and drawing attention to the need for more programs to serve the millions of children across the country who are unsupervised and at risk each weekday afternoon.

Recent data from the *America After 3PM* report, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, shows a vast unmet demand for afterschool programs nationwide. In Texas, there are 935,000 Texas K-12 youth left unsupervised for an average of seven hours per week. More than 1.5 million Texas youth would participate in an afterschool program if one were available in their community. More work needs to be done to meet the great need for afterschool programs that keep Texas kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families.

“*Lights On Afterschool* celebrates the remarkable impact afterschool has on students, families and communities,” said Alison Reis-Khanna, Executive Director of the Texas Partnership for Out of School Time. “It is a powerful reminder that afterschool programs provide a safe, engaging learning space for youth. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough afterschool programs, and too many kids are home alone in the afternoons or on the streets where they can be exposed to crime or risky behaviors. Our goal is to raise awareness to ensure that there are programs, funding, and community support for more quality afterschool programs.”

*Lights On Afterschool* is organized by the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information on the Afterschool Alliance, *Lights On Afterschool* and *America After 3PM* is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST) is a statewide nonprofit founded in 2011 with a mission to increase the quality and availability of afterschool, summer and expanding learning opportunities (ELO) for Texas K-12 youth. For more information, contact [www.txpost.org](http://www.txpost.org).

**Media Contact:** Alison Reis-Khanna, Texas Partnership for Out of School Time, 512-800-1152, [alison@txpost.org](mailto:alison@txpost.org)

## Sample Media Alert

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.



**September 26, 2015**

Sabrina Walker-Hernandez, Chief Professional Officer, [swalker@edinburgkids.com](mailto:swalker@edinburgkids.com)

**956.383.2582 (office)**

**956.453.3677 (cell)**

### **9,000 Events Nationwide Aim to Make Afterschool Programs Available to All Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV to Hold *Lights On Afterschool* October 22, 2015**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV afterschool program will sponsor a *Lights On Afterschool* day of events on **October 22, 2015**. This series of event will be one of more than an expected 9,000 such events around the nation that day, the annual *Lights On Afterschool*, organized by the Afterschool Alliance. The series of activities hosted in Edinburg will highlight and call for expanding afterschool opportunities so that every child who needs a program has access to one, and discuss the benefits of afterschool programs, including inspiring children to learn, keeping them safe in the sometimes perilous afternoon hours, and relieving working families of worries about their children's activities in the afternoon. At the events, parents and supporters will sign a [petition](#) that urges lawmakers not to deny or divert funding for afterschool programs.

Participants in the *Lights On Afterschool* include local elected officials, local business leaders, and educators. The series of events will spotlight the range of programming available at Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV, including its Garden to Table project, STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and Math) program, academic support, and Leadership & Character Development programs. Hundreds of parents, supporters and community members are expected to attend.

#### **Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV Lights On Afterschool Series of Events.**

**All events will be held at the main unit The Legacy Center located at 702 Cullen Street (Rogers 281 & Expway 281)**

##### Event 1 –Ribbon Cutting

- What: Ribbon Cutting for Garden to Table Project sponsored by HEB, Edinburg Rotary, United Way of South Texas and City of Edinburg
- When: 10:00am – 10:30am
- Where: South-side of building

##### Event 2 – Family Vision Screening

- What: Free Vision Screening – In partnership with South Texas Promotora parent & children will receive free vision screening and in most cases free eyes glasses. Not based on income.
- When: 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- Where: Media Room

##### Event 3- STEM Fair

- What: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Fair
- When: 5:00pm – 7:00pm
- Where: Youth Gameroom



Former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is Founding Chair of *Lights On Afterschool*, a position he has held since 2001.

Since 1969, the Boys & Girls Club has played an integral role in the Edinburg community, providing daily programs and services to over 18,000 young people. During the School year the Club is open Monday – Friday, 3:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. and during the summer the hours are 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. On all ECISD holidays and teachers work days the Legacy Center is open 7:30 am – 5:30 p.m. The Club has moved its main site and administration to its new building the Legacy Center located at 702 Cullen Street (Rogers and 281). The Club offers programs that emphasize character and leadership development, education and career development, health and life skills, the arts, and sport, fitness and recreation. If you would like to learn more about our scheduled activities call 956.383.2582 or visit our website [www.edinburgkids.com](http://www.edinburgkids.com). If you would like to make a contribution please contact Sabrina Walker-Hernandez, Chief Professional Officer at 956.383.2582 or email [swalker@edinburgkids.com](mailto:swalker@edinburgkids.com) or you can text “CLUB” to 20222 to donate \$5.00. A one-time donation of \$5.00 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Donor must be age 18+ and all donations must be authorized by the account holder (e.g. parents). By texting YES, the user agrees to the terms and conditions. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. Service is available on most carriers. Donations are collected for the benefit of the “BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF EDINBURG RGV” by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at [www.hmgf.org/t](http://www.hmgf.org/t). Message & Data Rates May Apply. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting STOP to short code “20222”; text HELP to “20222” for help or visit [www.hmgf.org/t](http://www.hmgf.org/t). Message and data rates may apply.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV is a proud City of Edinburg partner and a United Way of South Texas agency.

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information on *Lights On Afterschool* is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).

## Sample Proclamation

### Keeping the Lights On After School: A Proclamation

#### National Lights On Afterschool October 26, 2017

**WHEREAS**, the citizens of Edinburg stand firmly committed to quality afterschool programs and opportunities because they:

- Provide safe, challenging, engaging and fun learning experiences to help children and youth develop their social, emotional, physical, cultural and academic skills.
- Support working families by ensuring their children are safe and productive after the regular school day ends.
- Build stronger communities by involving our students, parents, business leaders and adult volunteers in the lives of our young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among children, youth, families and adults.
- Engage families, schools and diverse community partners in advancing the welfare of our children.

**WHEREAS**, The Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV has provided significant leadership in the area of community involvement in the education and well-being of our youth, grounded in the principle that quality afterschool programs are key to helping our children become successful adults.

**WHEREAS**, *Lights On Afterschool*, a national celebration of afterschool programs on October 26 promotes the critical importance of quality afterschool programs in the lives of children, their families and their communities.

**WHEREAS**, more than 28 million children in the U.S. have parents who work outside the home, and 15.1 million children have no place to go after school.

**WHEREAS**, many afterschool programs across the country are facing funding shortfalls so severe that they are being forced to close their doors and turn off their lights.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that I, RICHARD H. GARCIA, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF EDINBURG, TEXAS by the power vested in me by law, do hereby proclaim October 26, 2017, as "Lights On Afterschool Day"; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this mayor enthusiastically endorses Lights On Afterschool and commits our community to engage in innovative afterschool programs and activities that ensure the lights stay on and the doors stay open for all children after school.

**IN OBSERVANCE THEREOF**, I call upon the good people of Edinburg, Texas to join me in recognizing all those associated with making this endeavor a reality, and wishing them all the very best in the future.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and cased the seal of the City of Edinburg, Texas a Municipal Corporation, to be affixed on this the 3rd day of October, 2017.

CITY OF EDINBURG, TEXAS

By: \_\_\_\_\_

*Richard H. Garcia, Mayor*

ATTEST:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

*Myra L. Ayala Garza, City Secretary*



## Sample Event Invitation

*(on your letterhead)*

Dear [Policy Maker]:

On [date of event], our afterschool program will be participating in the annual *Lights On Afterschool*, a nationwide celebration of afterschool programs. We will be one of more than 8,000 sites across the nation sending the message that afterschool is key to children's success, and that we must keep the lights on and doors open after school. Parents, media, employers, neighbors, school officials and others have been invited to help us rally support for safe, stimulating afterschool programs.

We would like you to be part of our local celebration, scheduled for:

[Date and time]

[Place]

[Address]

*[Give a short description of what your celebration will include, as well as how you would like the policy maker to participate. An example below:]*

Our program is going to include a half hour ceremony and we would be honored to have you as our keynote presenter. Your role would include:

- A 15-minute statement of the benefits of afterschool
- Presentation of the proclamation to the program director

The benefits of quality afterschool programs are clear. They support working families by ensuring that children are safe and productive when the school day ends. Quality afterschool programs make our communities stronger by involving students, parents, business leaders and volunteers. Quality afterschool programs give children the opportunity to discover hidden talents as they grow academically and socially.

I look forward to having you join us for *Lights On Afterschool*. I will call you next week to confirm your availability. We hope that you will help us keep the lights on after school, and give our children a brighter future.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

## Social Media

### Before October 26

1. Use the hashtag #LightsOnAfterschool and @tx\_post in your tweets and Instagram posts.
2. Change your profile picture or cover photo to one of our Lights On Afterschool graphics. It's an easy way to show the world how excited you are to celebrate afterschool!
3. When you've got your event date, time, and location set, create a Facebook event, Eventbrite page, or other webpage with all the details about your celebration in one place. Share that link on social media so that people can RSVP and stay updated with any emerging details about the event.
4. Tweet or post to announce any guest speakers when you've got them confirmed, and be sure to tag them when possible. Better yet, ask them to post on their own social media accounts to share the date, time, and location of your event and let their audience know they'll be in attendance.
5. If your followers include colleagues from the afterschool community, share your favorite planning tips and resources from past years, whether those are from the Lights On event planning kit or just best practices you picked up yourself.
6. If your followers include people who live outside your city or town, share a link to our event locator to help them find a celebration in their area:  
<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm>
7. Get youth involved in your event planning by inviting older youth to serve as social media consultants. Youth are often in tune with the latest online trends: give them a hands-on role in your planning and they'll likely offer some new, creative ideas for your outreach!

### On October 26

1. Use the hashtag #LightsOnAfterschool in your tweets and Instagram posts.
2. Take lots of photos and videos! Share some of these during the event or, if possible, "livetweet" to show members of your audience who couldn't attend the celebration what's happening in real time.
3. Use a live streaming video platform like [Periscope](#) or [Facebook Live](#) to broadcast student performances, exciting guest speakers, or other dynamic components of your event. It's a surprisingly easy way to provide a window into your celebration, and all it takes is a smartphone and a strong internet connection!
  - o Periscope best practices: <http://blog.ketchum.com/15-periscope-twitter-tips/>
  - o Facebook Live best practices: <https://www.facebook.com/facebookmedia/best-practices/live>
4. Share kids' and families comments. Your students and their families can be some of the best spokespeople for your program. Ask them to share tweetable sound bites about

what afterschool means to them and retweet and share social media posts from attendees. Take note of any great comments you overhear during the celebration!

#### After October 26

1. As you wrap up your social media posts, keep using the hashtag #LightsOnAfterschool
2. Share photos or videos from the celebration—both on social media and with us! Email your favorite photos to [info@txpost.org](mailto:info@txpost.org) with your program name and location in the subject line.
3. Thank your audience for attending and for their support of your program and afterschool in general.
4. Thank your policymakers and local officials, guest speakers, and other individuals who were integral to the success of your event.
5. Blog, tweet and post about your event. Too busy to share during your *Lights On Afterschool* celebration? Reflect on your event in the days that follow to help keep your community interested and keep the celebration going!